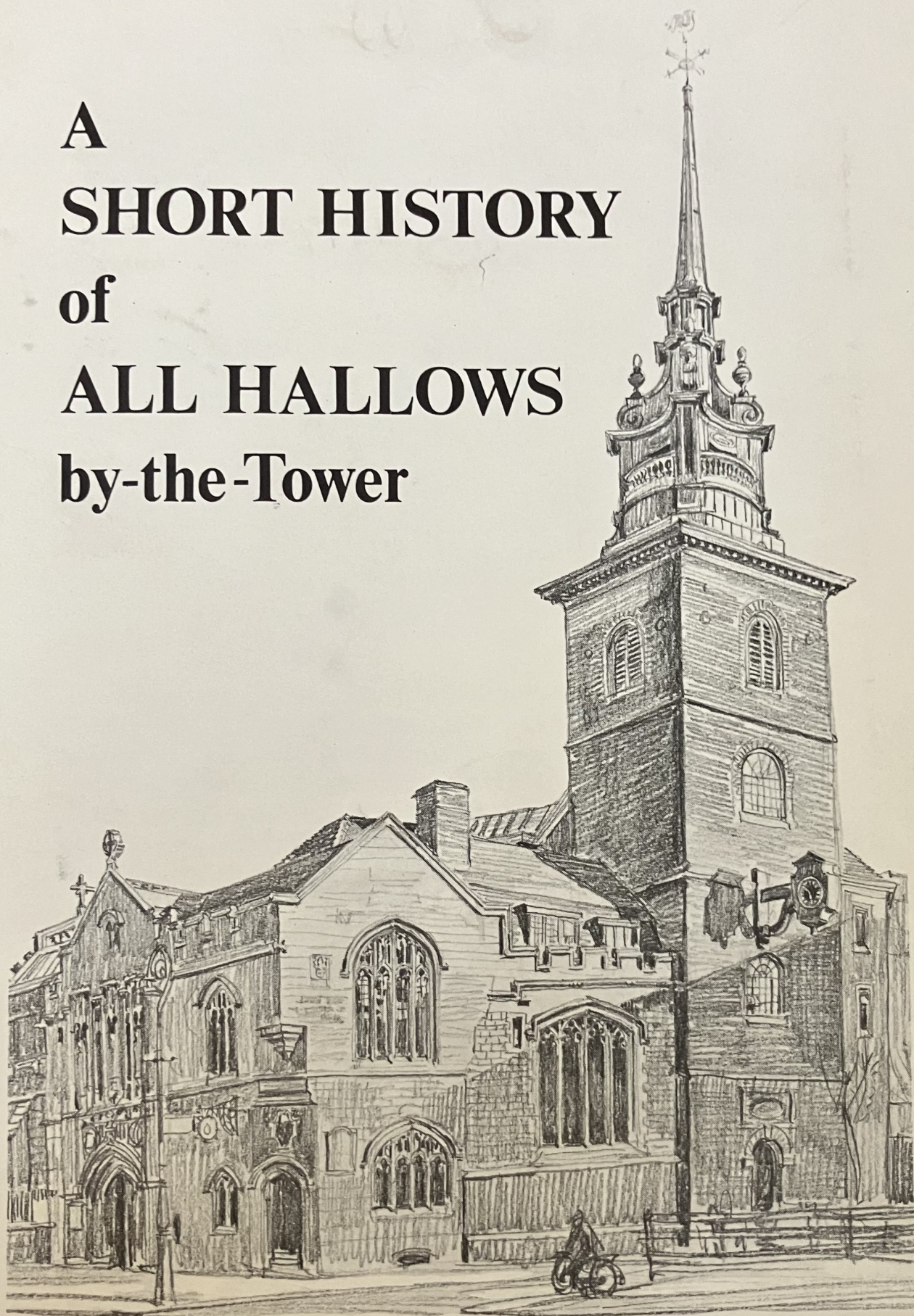


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A
SHORT HISTORY
of
ALL HALLOWS
by-the-Tower



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All Hallows by the Tower

ALL HALLOWS-BY-THE-TOWER, the most ancient of the parish churches in the City of London, stands upon a site where, since Saxon days, a church has stood and lived to the glory of God. But centuries before this period the Romans made dwellings here. The paving of the house of some Roman Londoner can be seen in the Undercroft; other remains over 18 centuries old were seen during excavations in 1926.

The old title 'All Hallowes de Berkingechirche' shows that the church was once the responsibility of the Abbey of Barking in Essex. This Abbey was founded by Erkenwald before he became Bishop of London in AD 675, and his sister Ethelburga was its first Abbess. A Saxon arch, turned in Roman tile without a keystone, is visible at the west end of All Hallows. This arch may belong to the late 7th century, and the Saxon All Hallows is usually related to this period. The responsibility for appointing a priest to the parish lay with Barking Abbey for much of the time, until the Abbey was Dissolved in 1539. Since 1565 the right of Presentation has been exercised by the Archbishops of Canterbury.



The ringing of the Curfew to warn people to return home, lay down their arms and cover up their fires was a common practice throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. All Hallows is mentioned as one of the three City churches from which was rung Curfew, only "substantial persons of good reputation" being exempt from its voice.

The idea of a Christian church as a place of sanctuary goes far back into history. We have the names of some who claimed sanctuary in All Hallows. In 1325, on Sunday 7th September, two Flemings known as John Paling and Nicholas Crabbe argued by the River. Crabbe stabbed Paling and tried to drown him; Paling killed Crabbe and fled to All Hallows for sanctuary. Sanctuary he found but not safety — he died in the church a fortnight later. Until 1321 he might have been allowed to escape during the night.

In the 13th and 14th centuries All Hallows was often the setting for legal processes. Some of the stages in the trials of the Knights Templar took place here in 1311. The

church was often used for the solemn Sealing of documents of State.

On the northern edge of the churchyard (we might say today "across the road") stood, from 1261 to 1547, the Chapel of St. Mary. In this chapel there stood a statue of Our Lady, to which miracles were ascribed. Like All Hallows, this Chapel was sometimes used for legal purposes, and saw the so-called Reconciliation of five of the Knights Templar on 5th July 1311. The chapel and its Statue became highly thought of among all classes of people, so that All Hallows was thought of as "the church of the parish where the chapel is". It was pulled down in 1547.

Attached to this Chapel was a Guild or Fraternity "in worship of the Blessed Virgin Mary". This Guild seems to have been founded before 1400 AD, and received a Charter from King Henry VI in 1442. There was a Master and four Wardens; the members could be men or women. One of the Masters was John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, a great Humanist scholar of the 15th century. John Croke, Alderman of the City, whose tomb stands in All Hallows, was a Warden of the Guild.

IV

In 1465, Edward ■ raised the Chapel to the status of a Royal Chantry. There were to be two Chaplains, or Chantry priests. Their primary duties lay within the Chapel, but on Sundays and Holy Days they were to worship in All Hallows.



Being next to the Tower, All Hallows was often used for the burial of those executed on Tower Hill. Here were buried John Fisher, Bishop and Cardinal (reburied in the Tower on the day of Sir Thomas More's execution), Henry Howard (Earl of Surrey, soldier and poet), Lord Thomas Grey (uncle of Lady Jane Grey), Peckham and Daniell (both hanged and beheaded for planning a coup d'état in favour of Queen Elizabeth I) and William Laud (Archbishop of Canterbury), beheaded 1645.

With the making of the Authorised ("King James") Version of the Bible All Hallows has proud connections, for four translators had links with this church. Two were Vicars — Robert Tighe and Thomas Ravis (later Bishop of London). Two others were brought up in the parish — Bishop Lancelot Andrewes and his brother Roger.

On the evening of "January 4th, 1649" (our year 1650) there occurred a "wofull accydent of Powder and Fire" Seven barrells of gunpowder exploded in a ship-chandler's house in Tower St. The explosion, and the resultant fire, killed 67 people, destroyed 5 houses, "blewe up" 10 more, and made another 26 uninhabitable. After the disaster, a baby safely in her cradle was found unharmed on the Church roof. The Vicarage and the church were badly damaged, and the tower was found so unsafe that a new one, the existing Tower, was built in 1658. This tower is one of the few examples of ecclesiastical building during the Commonwealth.

The Great Fire of London began early in the morning of Sunday September 2nd, 1666, in a baker's shop in Pudding Lane. By the Tuesday it was roaring up Tower St. Before it was contained, the fire burned the church "Dyall" and part of the porch. Admiral Sir William Penn saved the church by ordering sailors to make a fire-break by blowing up houses near the church. (This Admiral Penn had a son, also William, who was baptised in All Hallows and became the founder of Pennsylvania.) Samuel Pepys records in his Diary how he went "up to the top of Barking steeple" and watched the "great fires, oyle-cellars and brimstone and other things burning" until he "became afeared to stay there long and down again as fast as I could".

A notable figure in the life of the Church of England in the 17th century was George Hickes, Vicar of All Hallows and later Bishop of Thetford. He was a non-juror, refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance to William and Mary.

In 1884, Canon A. J. Mason (Vicar of All Hallows, author of "Before the Throne") created a small College of missionary priests. The College dwindled, but a new beginning was made after the Revd. P.T.B. ("Tubby") Clayton became Vicar in 1922. "Tubby" was the Founder of Toc H. In December 1915 he had established in Poperinghe, six miles from Ypres, a centre for soldiers of all ranks fighting in Flanders. The house was called "Talbot House" after Gilbert Talbot, son of the Bishop of Winchester. In the signallers' language of the time, Talbot House became Toc H. Through fellowship, fairmindedness and service, Toc H seeks to establish conditions in individuals and groups where the reign of God can more easily operate. In 1922 All Hallows became the Guild Church of Toc H, and the North Aisle, with its altar of St. Nicholas, became the Chapel of the Lamp of Maintenance.

On December 8th, 1940 a high-explosive bomb fell near the church, and blew out most of the east wall. Three weeks later, on the 29th, fire bombs rained down and set alight the entire church. All that remained was the Crypt and Undercroft, the shell of the Tower, the bare north and south walls — and the wooden door of the pulpit (now the front of the Litany desk).

Plans for rebuilding were made. Many journeys abroad were made to enlist help. The foundation stone was laid by Queen Elizabeth on July 19th, 1948. Generous gifts of materials, which would not otherwise have been available, were made. Steel came from America; heating-pipes from Australia; flooring tiles from Canada; timber from Australia, Canada and New Zealand; copper from Northern Rhodesia and timber for the Spire from British Columbia.

On July 23rd, 1957, in the presence of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and of a great congregation, the church was re-dedicated by the Bishop of London.

The designs for the magnificently rebuilt church were made by the Architects, Lord Mottistone and Mr. Paul Paget, F.F.R.I.B.A.; the builders were Dove Bros. Ltd., and the day-by-day oversight of work lay with William George. Such authorities as Sir John Betjeman and Sir Arthur Bryant have commended the work of restoration as among the best in post-war London.

THE CHURCH TODAY

East Exterior

Above the east window is sculptured the Toc H Lamp of Maintenance.

North Exterior

Over the entrance to the Porch are figures of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Ethelburga and Bishop Lancelot Andrewes. To the right are the Arms of the Diocese of London; to the left are Arms often said to relate to St. Ethelburga.

This porch was rebuilt in the 19th century to the design of the learned Architect J.L. Pearson. The north wall dates from the 14th century.

West End

The four beautiful bronze figures, free-standing near

the South Porch, were made by John Robinson. They are a Memorial by "friends and business associates" to Frederick Clive Bowring.

The Arms on the panels of the screen which separates the Book Centre from the Nave are those of HRH Queen Mary and of the Houston family.

The Organ is dedicated to the memory of Queen Mary; part of the cost of this Organ was met by the daughters of Samuel F. Houston of Philadelphia. The organ has some 3000 pipes; it was built by Harrison & Harrison of Durham, and was designed to allow great flexibility of use in Service-accompaniment and in professional recitals.

The brass Alms Box, dated 1787, is from Christ's Hospital.

The Ensign and Crest are those of the Royal Naval Minewatching Service, Port of London, whose parent church is All Hallows.

Baptistry

The structure was the gift of the late Cmdr. Walter C. Northcott. The front, of Gibraltar rock, was carved by Tulipiani, a Sicilian prisoner-of-war, in 1943. The font cover is by Grinling Gibbons (1648-1720). Two panels of modern glass are by Keith New, whose work is to be found also in Coventry Cathedral.

Tower and Spire

The Tower (1658) is one of the few examples of Cromwellian ecclesiastical architecture. This is the actual tower climbed by Samuel Pepys to see the Great Fire of London. The Spire (1958), the first in the City to be built to an original design for over 200 years, is largely the gift of the late Capt. Sir Ion Hamilton Benn, CB. DSO. RN. for many years a Churchwarden of this Church.

Bells

The 18 bells form the largest tuned set in any Anglican building in the United Kingdom. The bells were founded and the mechanism made by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, and are named as the McConnell Chime, the gift of John Wilson McConnell of Montreal.

South Wall

This is partly 14th and 17th century work.

South Aisle (Mariners' Chapel)

Shipping companies based in the City of London restored and refurnished this chapel.

The Crucifix figure is Spanish of the 15th century, and there is a tradition that it once hung in the cabin of a Spanish Armada Captain. The wood of the Cross comes from the tea-clipper Cutty Sark.

The stairs lead to the Oratory of St. Clare, a 17th century vault. This is the Oratory of Toc H Women's Association, and has the Association's Lamp of the Magnificat behind the grille. Next to this Oratory is the Chapel of St. Francis, which is a 14th century Crypt.

Nave

The pillar to the north of the altar is 14th century work.

The two oak chairs outside the Sanctuary are late 17th century. The chair between them is maple wood, a gift of Toc H Maryborough, Queensland, the town where "Tubby" Clayton was born.

The altar-mural of the Last Supper, in memory of George Garforth-Bles, is by Brian Thomas, the designer of the east window in St. Paul's Cathedral. The carvings on the stonework are traditional emblems of the Passion of Christ.

The Altar is a copy of the Jacobean Holy Table destroyed in 1940. The wrought-iron candlesticks were designed by the late Lord Mottistone. The credence table is the gift of Toc H Woking, and was carved by one of the members of that Branch.

The Communion rails incorporate some of the 18th century work which survived the bombs of 1940.

The pulpit dates from about 1670 (school of Grinling Gibbons) and came from St. Swithun London Stone. The canopy above has the Latin words of 1 Corinthians 1²³, "in spite of it, our way is to preach Christ crucified".

The panel on the front of the Litany desk was the door

of the prewar pulpit, found almost unburned after the fire of 1940.

The lectern rails of Sussex iron (1613) were very badly damaged in 1940 and were restored by Mr. R.C. Southernwood of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The three sword rests are those of three Lord Mayors of London who lived in the Parish in the 18th century — Sir John Eyles, Slingsby Bethell MP, and Sir Thomas Chitty.

In the Nave are two oak figures, one of St. Roche (patron Saint of those ill with plague) and one of St. James Compostella. The name Compostella is an extreme corruption of the Latin of the name "James the Apostle".

North Aisle

The pew ends here, as throughout the church, are carved with Arms, badges or symbols of the donors.

Beneath the grille covering what was the entrance to the rood-loft stair are some mediæval floor tiles, at an earlier floor level. The statue behind this grille is of St. Anthony of Padua.

The windows are filled with modern heraldic glass, the work of the late Farrar Bell and his son, Michael Farrar Bell.

The recumbent effigy in front of the Sanctuary commemorates those who fell in the First World War. It is that of Alfred Henry Forster, second son of the late Lord Forster, Governor General of Australia. The sculptor was the late Cecil Thomas, OBE, FRBS, for whom "young Forster's death" had a deep significance. Half a century after making this effigy of Forster, Cecil Thomas made the classical recumbent effigy of the Revd. Philip ("Tubby") Clayton which was dedicated in December 1976.

In this aisle hangs the pennant of Field Marshal Viscount Plumer, Commander of the Second Army on the Western Front in the First World War, and a devoted member of Toc H.

The beautiful canopied tomb "by the Altar of St. Nicholas" is that of Alderman John Croke, with a brass (1477) showing his family. The casket, made by the Bromsgrove Guild of Art, contains the Toc H Lamp of

Maintenance, presented by Edward, Prince of Wales. Shields within the casket depict the Arms of those places where Toc H branches had been founded between 1919 and 1929.

The Altar is Jacobean, and the Credence cupboard is Italian of the 15th or 16th century.

The altar-piece is thought to be by Jan Prevost, a Flemish painter of the late 15th century, and was originally the double-sided wings of a Triptych. It seems to have been commissioned by Sir Robert Tate (Lord Mayor of London 1488, died late in 1500), either for his own Chantry in the Royal Chapel of St. Mary near All Hallows, or for his other Chantry in St. Michael's, Coventry. After 1547, the Triptych disappeared, and came to light again without the centre panel. In the 20th century it came to All Hallows on loan, and was bought for the church by Messrs. Tate & Lyle.

In the 17th century, a tomb whose owner was "unknown" is recorded in All Hallows, not even a legend hinting at a name. It was similar to the Croke tomb, but plainer, and stood in the south aisle until destroyed by the Blitz in 1940. This may well have been Tate's tomb, "spirited away" to the church when the Chapel of St. Mary was destroyed at the Dissolution of the Chantries.

Undercroft

The area of Roman tessellated pavement belongs to some Roman building of the 1st or 2nd century A.D. The model of Roman London shows the City as it was about 400 A.D. and was made by A. G. Lowther ARIBA. The fragments of the shaft of a Saxon cross were found in the church, as was the half of a Cross also displayed. There is Church plate covering a span of time of four centuries. At the east end is a Memorial Chapel originally designed by Alec Smithers FRIBA, with an Altar made of stones from the Templar Church at Castle Athlit in Palestine. The registers of baptisms, marriages and burials survive complete from 1558, of Churchwardens' accounts from 1625, and of Vestry Minutes from 1629.

The Brasses

There are seventeen brasses dating from 1389 to 1651, with some palimpsest material dating from 1320. Permission to make brass-rubbings must be obtained by personal or written application to the Verger.



How to get to All Hallows-by-the-Tower



The Short History

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